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United States
Department of
Agriculture

Animal and Plant
Health Inspection
Service

Veterinary
Services

Washington, DC
20250

VETERINARY SERVICES MEMORANDUM NO. 565.14

SUBJECT: Reporting Detections of Low Pathogenic Notifiable Avian Influenza (H5 and H7 Subtypes) to the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and to Trading Partners

TO: VS Management Team (VSMT)
Directors, VS

I. PURPOSE

This memorandum details procedures to ensure a common approach with consistency and uniformity in reporting Low Pathogenic Notifiable Avian Influenza (LPNAI) detected in the United States.

II. BACKGROUND

Over the past 5 years, U.S. trading partners have been quick to penalize our poultry industry with partial or complete bans of poultry and poultry products whenever the United States has reported a finding of avian influenza (AI), even in the absence of epidemiological risk of transmitting the disease in such products.

In May of 2005, the International Committee of the OIE adopted a new Code Chapter on AI. The only low pathogenic subtypes of AI required to be reported to the OIE are the H5 and H7 subtypes. Furthermore, these subtypes need to be reported only *if they are detected in certain poultry population segments*. No other low pathogenic subtypes are required to be, or should be, reported. This memorandum serves to focus on the reporting requirements of the new OIE Code Chapter for *LPNAI*.

III. SPECIFIC OIE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS – U.S. POULTRY COMPARTMENTS

- A. The OIE Code applies the concept of compartmentalization to the AI Chapter. *Compartments* are populations of animals with a common biosecurity management system.
- B. LPNAI will be reported to the OIE *only* if detections occur in the following compartments:
 - 1. Broiler, turkey, or layer breeder production flocks;
 - 2. Duck breeder and other upland game breeder flocks;
 - 3. Commercial (grow-out) broiler and turkey flocks (meat type birds);
 - 4. Pullet production flocks;
 - 5. Commercial layer (table-egg) flocks; and
 - 6. Commercial poultry flocks used for the production of other commercial products such as feathers (down) and foie gras



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- C. Breeder broiler, breeder turkey, breeder layer, and breeder game-type flocks are all monitored for AI under the National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP). Commercial production flocks (except for hunting/game flocks) either are currently monitored or are scheduled to be monitored for H5 and H7 AI as an extension of the NPIP.
- D. Detections of LPNAI from environments such as backyard flocks, wildlife, and live-bird markets *will not be reported* to the OIE. Detections of H5 and H7 LPNAI subtypes in game birds raised for release into the wild also will not be reported because true separation between these captive reared animals and free-ranging wildlife will not be possible following release. These detections only will be reported when the annual wildlife disease report is submitted.

IV. REQUIRED LABORATORY RESULTS

- A. Serological findings alone are not sufficient to trigger reporting. Rather, the following reportable characteristics, define the occurrence of LPNAI virus infection when found in the aforementioned breeder and commercial production compartments:
 - 1. *Notifiable LPNAI virus has been isolated and identified, or viral RNA specific to LPNAI* has been detected in poultry or a product derived from poultry; or
 - 2. Antibodies to H5 and H7 subtypes of LPNAI virus that are not a consequence of vaccination have been detected in the aforementioned poultry compartments. *However, LPNAI may be ruled out on the basis of a thorough epidemiological investigation* that demonstrates no further evidence of LPNAI infection. Therefore, serological findings alone only will be reported after further epidemiological investigation demonstrates evidence of LPNAI spread in other subpopulations.
- B. The National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) makes the final laboratory confirmation of LPNAI and is responsible for performing the diagnostic test only. NVSL, in consultation with the Sanitary International Standards Team (SIST) Director and the National Animal Health Policy and Programs' (NAHPP) Associate Deputy Administrator (ADA), will make the ultimate determination and will have direct responsibility to report any findings.

V. COORDINATION AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

- A. NAHPP's Aquaculture, Swine, Equine, and Poultry Health (ASEP) staff is responsible for coordinating all information between the field, the laboratory, and others at headquarters. Specifically, ASEP's NPIP Coordinator will work with ASEP's poultry specialists to obtain all the necessary information on any detection from the field and the laboratory.
- B. During the course of an investigation, the ASEP staff will provide the National Centers for Import and Export (NCIE), and specifically SIST, the latest updates of the investigation. No one may release any official information until the OIE report has been finalized and submitted. NCIE, via Regional Directors, may release reports of laboratory results (as it is currently done) to the State Veterinarian and the Area Veterinarian-in-Charge (AVIC) of that State.
- C. Chronology-- Coordination and Communication Procedures:

Field personnel (inclusive of submissions from local and State laboratories) identifies and reports suspect LPNAI in commercial compartment.¹

1. Samples submitted to NVSL.
2. NVSL reports results to Regional Director and AVIC of State of submitting sample.
3. If sample(s) are positive, Regional Director notifies ASEP Director, SIST Director, NAHPP ADA, and Emergency Management and Diagnostics (EM&D) ADA.
4. ASEP staff (NPIP coordinator and poultry specialists on staff) gathers information from
 - a. Pertinent State and Federal (AVIC) officials via Regional Directors.
 - b. NVSL.
5. ASEP staff provides updated information to:
 - a. NCIE/SIST
 - b. NCIE/Sanitary Trade Issues Team (STIT)
 - c. NCIE/Technical Trade Services Teams.

It is not NCIE/SIST's responsibility to gather this information; however SIST will review and summarize the information in preparation for an OIE report.

7. ASEP and SIST Directors review information to determine if reporting LPNAI reporting to OIE and trading partners is required.
- D. ASEP and SIST Directors determine incident is reportable to OIE and Trading Partners:
1. ASEP Director informs NAHPP ADA.
 2. NAHPP ADA informs Veterinary Services Deputy Administrator (VSDA).
 3. External communication listed below is prepared by NCIE staffs, but not released.
 4. NCIE/SIST notifies the OIE and copies:
 - a. NCIE Directors (including Import/Export Coordinators);
 - b. NAHPP Directors;
 - c. International Services (IS)/Trade Support Team (TST);
 - d. IS/Deputy Administrator;
 - e. NAHPP's ADA and Chief of Staff;
 - f. VSDA;
 - g. VS/Regional Directors;
 - h. NVSL; and
 - i. CEAH.
 5. External communication listed below is released through specified channels – no information is to be released until OIE is notified.

VI. EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION – DURING PREPERATION OF THE OIE REPORT:

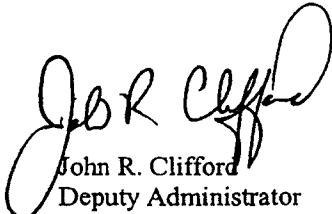
NCIE-STIT prepares industry alert notice (U.S.A. Poultry and Egg Export Council [USAPEEC], National Turkey Federation [NTF], National Chicken Council [NCC] and United Egg Producers [UEP]). NAHPP's ADA will send the industry notice *after* OIE notification. Simultaneously, NCIE/STIT will work with IS/TST staff to concurrently develop pertinent talking points and/or targeted letters to the chief veterinary officers of various countries, which NCIE will provide to

¹ Note: if this is part of an FAD investigation, then the Emergency Management will notify and keep the ASEP unit apprised of such an investigation. If confirmed as a LPNAI, the ASEP staff will monitor the events from then on.

Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS) and IS field personnel to share with trading partners. Prior to release, the talking points will be reviewed by the SIST Director to ensure consistency with the OIE report. Such talking points should contain text that helps clarify or further explain the OIE report (rather than create questions and generate confusion). OIE reports typically contain only information (specific facts) sufficient to describe the incident and nothing more. TST will work with ASEP and NCIE to draft international responses, cables, instructions, or other communications to the field.

VII. AFTER THE OIE REPORT:

ASEP will continue to provide weekly information to all of NCIE, and NCIE/SIST will update the OIE as needed. Additionally, all FAS, U.S. Trade Representative (USTR), and inquiries from APHIS/IS posts should be directed to TST. FAS and APHIS posts must work through their TST Trade Directors for information and guidance. If no one in TST is available, ASEP will work directly with the designated contact in FAS (to be determined).



John R. Clifford
Deputy Administrator
Veterinary Services